

Serial No. 09/925,063

Docket No. 70373-010100

REMARKS

Applicants once again thank the Examiner for his courteous and constructive discussions of June 11 and 16, 2003, wherein various cited art was discussed, as well as amendments to the claims. Applicants also wish to thank the Examiner for the constructive discussions held with Applicants' representatives and an inventor on December 9, 2003. Applicants cancel claims 1-20 without prejudice or disclaimer and reserve the right to pursue such claims in a future related case or cases.

Amendments previously made clarify and claim particular aspects of the present invention and are based upon the discussions with the Examiner.

Claim 43 had been previously added, in accordance with the above discussions with the Examiner. New independent claims 44 and 45 and dependent claims 46-66 are added in light of discussion with the Examiner held on December 9, 2003, in order to more clearly point out and distinguish particular aspects of the invention.

In the Office Action mailed August 26, 2003, claims 1-5, 9-28, 32-40, 42 and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cilento et al. (US 5059189) in combination with Sablotsky et al (US 4994278). Additionally, claims 6-8, 18, 29-31 and 41 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cilento et al. in combination with Sablotsky et al. and in further combination with Godbey et al. (US 5372819). Applicants respectfully traverse these 35 U.S.C 103(a) rejections.

Many of these rejections are moot in light of the cancellation claims 1-20 without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, this response will be directed to 103 (a) rejections to claims that remain pending in the case, namely 21-43, and to new claims 44-66.

During the interview of December 9, 2003, claims 21-43 were discussed. In particular, the step wherein the adhesive layer is formed, calendered and laminated to the backing layer was discussed. During the interview, Applicants informed the Examiner of the desire and resultant advantages of calendering the adhesive composition between a second roll and a third roll to form a hydrocolloid dressing comprising a backing film layer and an adhesive layer, wherein the

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adhesive composition is formed, applied and calendered directly onto the backing film layer such that formation of an adhesive layer of said adhesive composition and lamination of said adhesive layer to said backing film composition is achieved in a single manufacturing step. This single step of layer formation and lamination to the backing layer results in a clear economic advantage for producing calendered hydrocolloid dressings, as opposed to the prior art method of forming the adhesive layer separately, for example as a pre-made film and typically at another manufacturing location, and then laminating the film/layer onto a backing as a separate step. The claimed methods result in improved manufacturing efficiency and hence provide an economic advantage over prior art methods.

Applicants once again note that there is no teaching or suggestion found in the cited references, alone or in combination, that meet the limitations of the independent method claims for manufacturing a calendered hydrocolloid dressing, particularly the formation and lamination of an adhesive layer directly onto a backing layer in a single manufacturing step, as claimed and discussed with the Examiner during the interview of December 9, 2003.

Claim 44 has been added to more clearly point out the extruding and calendering aspect of the single manufacturing step recited in the claims, particularly formation of the adhesive layer, application and calendering/lamination directly onto to the backing layer in a single step.

New claim 45 and claims dependent therefrom (46-66) have been added to clearly point out the extruding and calendering aspect of the single manufacturing step, as well as claim additional various aspects of the methods provided by the teachings of the present invention. Dependent claims 46-66 are similar to claims currently pending claims 22-42, the difference being the independent claim from which they depend.

Accordingly and in light of comments and discussions with the Examiner, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all pending 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejections.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is now in good order for allowance, and such early action is respectfully solicited.

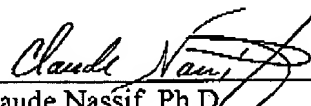
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Respectfully submitted,

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